REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-8, 11-16 and 19-21 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 8, 15 and 16 are amended, and claims 2, 3, 9, 10, 17 and 18 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1, 8 and 16 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2 and 3, 9 and 10, and 17 and 18, respectively. Support for the amendment to claim 15 can be found, for example, on page 30, lines 3-8. Thus, no new matter is added.

I.   §103(a) Rejections of Claims 1-6, 8-14 and 16-20

The Office Action (i) rejects claims 1-6 and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori, U.S. Patent No. 5,761,496 in view of Kalogeraki et al. (Kalogeraki), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0204497; (ii) rejects claims 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori in view of Kalogeraki, and further in view of the Background of the Application (Background); and (iii) rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori, Kalogeraki and Background, and further in view of Liddy et al. (Liddy), U.S. Patent No. 6,026,388. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Contrary to the Office Action's assertion, Hattori fails to disclose or suggest that the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition so as to be wider when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the retrieval result has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, and performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed, as now recited in independent claims 1, 8 and 16.

Hattori discloses, in Fig. 25, a retrieval expression generation process performed by the retrieval management section 2220 in which the retrieval parameter K is modified if the estimated number of retrieval count does not fall between the specific minimum retrieval count and the specified maximum retrieval (step 2560 or step 2570) (see col. 23, lines 8-12

and 23-29). Hattori teaches that as the value of the retrieval parameter K becomes closer to 0, the retrieval condition becomes less restrictive and <u>the number of data items retrieved from the database increases</u> (col. 23, lines 34-37). Specifically, Hattori teaches, in col. 24, lines 44-54:

> [I]f the estimated retrieval count is greater than the maximum retrieval count in step 2570, the value of the retrieval parameter K is assigned to the minimum value, and the medium between the maximum value of the retrieval parameter and the value of the retrieval parameter K is assigned to the retrieval parameter K (step 2590). For example, if the initial value of the retrieval parameter K is 0.5 and the minimum value and the maximum value of the retrieval parameter are 0 and 1, respectively, the minimum value of the retrieval parameter is changed from 0 to 0.5 and the value of the retrieval parameter K is changed from [sic] 0.75.

That is, the value of the retrieval parameter K is changed from 0.5 to the larger parameter value of 0.75. Thus, Hattori teaches that the range designated by parameter K changes by <u>increasing</u> from 0-0.5 to 0-0.75 (e.g., "the number of data items retrieved from the database increases," as discussed above). Accordingly, the range of 0-0.5, used in the first retrieval process, is <u>again used</u> in the second retrieval process, which uses the range 0-0.75. Therefore, Hattori does not disclose or suggest the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition so as to be wider when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the retrieval result has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, and performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range <u>excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed</u>, as recited in independent claims 1, 8 and 16.

Further, Kalogeraki and Liddy fail to overcome the deficiencies of Hattori. Thus, claims 1, 8 and 16, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable over the applied references. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

II.   §103(a) Rejection of Claims 7, 15 and 21

The Office Action rejects claims 7, 15 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori and Kalogeraki, and further in view of Liddy. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hattori, Kalogeraki and Liddy each fail to disclose or suggest that the rearranging is executed when the plurality of items of service information exceeds a number set in advance, as recited in independent claim 15. Liddy merely discloses matching documents to a query that organizes documents based on scores in a ranked list (Abstract; col. 2, lines 61-67). Hattori and Kalogeraki are acknowledged by the Office Action as <u>not</u> disclosing the claimed output means that rearranges the plurality of items of service information. Thus, claim 15 is patentable over the applied references.
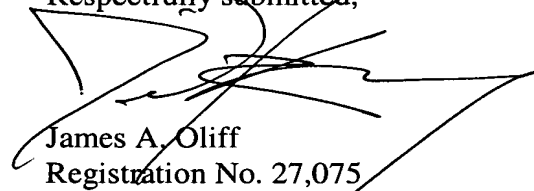
Further, Liddy fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hattori, discussed above, with respect to claims 1 and 16. Thus, claims 7 and 21, which incorporate the features of claims 1 and 16, respectively, also are patentable over the applied references. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

III. <u>Conclusion</u>

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

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